

year's recipient of the Nevada Medal presented by the Desert Research Institute.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I would like to take a minute to recognize an enduring legacy of John F. Kennedy—the Peace Corps—in recognition of its 47th anniversary this year and to commend 44 constituents from Northern Virginia currently serving in 38 countries around the world. It is an honor to serve with the likes of my colleague and friend CHRIS SHAYS and others in this body and the other who served our country in the enhancement of citizen diplomacy. I hope all Americans will join us in supporting and expanding this enduring commitment to convey our values as a nation.

As Fareed Zakaria wrote: “We must begin to think about life after Bush—a cheering prospect for his foes, a dismaying one for his fans (however few there may be at the moment). In 10 months he will be a private citizen, giving speeches to insurance executives. America, however, will have to move on and restore its place in the world. To do this we must first tackle the consequences of our foreign policy of fear. Having spooked ourselves into believing that we have no option but to act fast, alone, unilaterally and preemptively, we have managed in six years to destroy decades of international good will, alienate allies, embolden enemies and yet solve few of the major international problems we face.”

The London Financial Times last December reported that the U.S. has suffered a significant loss of power and prestige around the world in the years since the beginning of this century, limiting our ability to influence international crises, according to an annual survey from a well regarded British security think-tank. The 2007 Strategic Survey of the non-partisan International Institute for Strategic Studies picked the decline of U.S. authority as one of the most important security developments of the past year—but suggested the fading of American prestige began earlier, largely due to its failings in Iraq.

One of our most special and effective citizen agencies of public diplomacy is the Peace Corps. Think of this—more than 187,000 volunteers have served this venerable legacy of former President Kennedy, serving in 139 countries—where they bring our values to other peoples, and bring understanding and appreciation of other cultures back home.

The greatest gift of the Peace Corps and other civilian programs is not just that ordinary Americans share their values and our culture with other peoples, but also that when volunteers return, they bring greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

Foreign policy is not just what we do, but also who we are. America as a place has often been the great antidote to U.S. foreign policy—and it should be again. Mr. Zakaria writes that “When American actions across the world have seemed harsh, misguided or unfair, America itself has always been open, welcoming and tolerant * * *

At the end of the day, our openness is our greatest foreign policy. We have succeeded

not because of the ingenuity of our government, but rather because of efforts like this unique program to keep ourselves open to the world—to sending our people out across the countries of the world to share our unique culture, our goods and services, our ideas and inventions, our people and cultures. This openness, this civilian diplomacy, has allowed us to make friends across boundaries. It will be central to our place as a Nation in the future.

This week, as we celebrate National Peace Corps Week, we honor the more than 190,000 volunteers who have served in 139 developing countries since President Kennedy's call to service in 1961—and I honor 44 of my constituents currently serving our country in places as diverse as China, Mali, Azerbaijan, Macedonia, El Salvador, and Namibia. This can be lonely and demanding service but service that can create enduring friendships and values that transcend boundaries and cultures.

Today, more than 8,000 Peace Corps volunteers around the world are currently providing training and education in 74 countries. These volunteers each donate their time and skills for over two years, in order to make a difference in the world and to promote understanding between cultures. By offering their valuable skills and showing a passion for helping others, they show the world that Americans value learning and cross-cultural exchange.

Volunteers work in areas of education, health and HIV/AIDS, business development, environment, agriculture and youth, and must often be creative and flexible when living and working in new cultures and learning new languages. The resulting experience is rewarding for all involved, and it highlights the importance of cooperation and involvement between cultures around the globe.

When volunteers return home and share their overseas experiences with their communities, the Peace Corps helps Americans as much as the people in developing countries. From recent college graduates to doctors with decades of experience, volunteers choose to use their valuable skills and education to help people all over the world, but their work affects their lives long after returning home.

This week we remember the dedication and passion of Peace Corps volunteers, young and old, current and returned. We thank them for their service, and encourage more Americans to volunteer with the Peace Corps.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ROBERT CONGDON

HON. JON C. PORTER-

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor United States Army Staff Sergeant Robert Congdon, for his heroic efforts in saving five lives while under heavy enemy gunfire on January 18, 2008 in Iraq.

Robert is a native of the Las Vegas community. He is a graduate of Bonanza High School. He was a former local lifeguard, paramedic, and is currently an active member of the United States Army. Robert is currently stationed in Georgia, where his wife Bonnie and two year old daughter Samantha reside.

Robert's parents, Margaret and Gary Congdon reside in Las Vegas, Nevada along with his sister, Crystal Hill. His younger brother Michael is also in the United States Army and he is stationed in Sparks, Nevada.

Robert is currently on his second tour in Iraq. His first was with the 101st Airborne Division. On January 18, 2008, Robert was caught dodging bullets from a sniper while trying to rescue five soldiers wounded from a roadside blast on a Stryker armored vehicle. He found himself close enough to the blast to race toward his wounded comrades, and was able to avoid any other improvised explosive devices that might be nearby. Robert successfully rescued three of the wounded, and on his way back for the two remaining wounded soldiers, a sniper opened fire. He alerted other military personnel in the vicinity about the situation at hand, but he knew that he had to help his two remaining comrades to safety because of the severity of their wounds. Robert and medical personnel assisted in dragging the two men nearly the distance of a football field and bringing them to safety.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor United States Army Staff Sergeant Robert Congdon for his dedication to the United States Army, and dedication to his comrades. His leadership is a true testament of his honor and devotion to our nation. I am proud to represent this hero and the many others from the great state of Nevada.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on March 10, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my votes for rollcall Nos. 111–123.

Had I been present I would have voted: Rollcall No. 111—“no”—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 112—“no”—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 113—“no”—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 114—“no”—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 115—“yes”—Congratulating Iowa State University of Science and Technology for 150 years of leadership and service.

Rollcall No. 116—“yes”—On Motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair.

Rollcall No. 117—“yes”—The Intelligence Authorization Act of 2008.

Rollcall No. 118—“yes”—Congratulating the University of Kansas football team for winning the 2008 FedEx Orange Bowl and having the most successful year in program history.

Rollcall No. 119—“yes”—Congratulating the women's water polo team of the University of California, Los Angeles, for winning the 2007 NCAA Division I Women's Water Polo National Championship, and congratulating UCLA on its 100th NCAA sports national title, making it the most accomplished athletic program in NCAA history.

Rollcall No. 120—“yes”—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 121—“yes”—Providing for the adoption of the resolution (H. Res. 895) establishing within the House of Representatives an